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Africa on the Move

Enemark, Stig

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Africa on the Move

Sub-Saharan Africa is often referred to as an underdeveloped region with great potential, and many land professionals would agree. But Africa is now on the move. With an annual economic growth rate of above 5 per cent for more than a decade and the World Bank predicting this to continue, Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to grow twice as fast as the global economy (2.5 per cent annual growth). However, Sub-Saharan Africa is still mostly poor and has been unable to translate its recent robust growth into rapid poverty reduction. Compared to other developing regions Sub-Saharan Africa has generally been left behind and is struggling with issues such as insecurity of tenure, informal settlements and urban slums, land-ownership inequalities and landlessness, and degrading of natural resources. These issues indicate that poor land governance, including the manner in which land rights are defined and administered, may be the root of the problem.



PROF STIG ENEMARK
Honorary President, FIG, Denmark
enemark@plan.aau.dk

In recent years, comprehensive land reform projects have achieved significant progress in countries such as Rwanda and Ethiopia, and other nations are following their lead. At the regional scale the challenges are addressed by setting a promising agenda for Africa and by focusing on sustainable land governance as the core means to achieve the goals. The overarching agenda is set by the African Union, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa. It is adopted by the African leaders through two seminal documents: 'Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa' (2009) and the 'Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa' (2010).

But developing land policies is not an end in itself – they need to be effectively implemented. This relates to land reform programmes, land administration infrastructures and building of transparent and sustainable institutions. This process of implementation is facilitated by a capacity development framework currently being developed by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) as part of the Land Policy Initiative.

Furthermore, in July 2013 the World Bank released a report on 'Securing Africa's Land for Shared Prosperity'. This presents a 10-point programme to scale up land policy reforms and investments for improving land governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. The key elements include improving tenure security and land access, increasing efficiency and transparency in land administration services, developing capacity in land administration, and increasing scope and effectiveness of land use planning. The programme says it would cost African countries and their development partners, including the private sector, USD4.5 billion spread over 10 years to scale up these policy reforms and investments. This sounds like an extremely good bargain.

The possible merging of these initiatives will set a new and very promising agenda for Africa by changing the focus from projects for merely issuing titles to a more holistic approach to land governance including institutional development and the associated capacity-building activities. This is basically a human rights approach and should be strongly supported by the global community of land professionals. Let's celebrate that Africa is on the move...

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Quantum Spatial Formed through Merger of AeroMetric, Photo Science and WSI

AeroMetric, USA, recently announced that it has entered into definitive agreements to acquire two of the leading providers of geospatial services and solutions – Photo Science and Watershed Sciences (WSI) – to form Quantum Spatial. The new company will immediately be the largest provider of location-based tools, analytics and data in North America. ◀

▶ <http://tw.gs/R2tbcz>

CHC Launches Rugged GNSS Handheld Receiver

CHC has announced the availability of the LT400HS, a rugged 120-channel GPS+GLONASS handheld receiver designed to achieve sub-metre SBAS positioning to centimetre accuracy in RTK networks. The LT400HS is presented as a cost-effective and powerful GNSS solution for survey, construction and GIS professionals. ◀

▶ <http://tw.gs/R2tbGZ>



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